



Orange County Museum of Art  
3333 Avenue of the Arts  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
ocma.art

May 8, 2023

Honorable Mayor Stephens and Council Members of Costa Mesa  
77 Fair Drive  
Costa Mesa, CA, 92626

Dear Honorable Mayor Stephens and Council Members of Costa Mesa,

I am writing as both the CEO and Director of the Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA), as well as a member of the Arts Commission. I am in full support of allocating the funds requested to the 2024 Arts Budget. I believe that access to art is a basic human right, not a privilege. Costa Mesa has long been recognized as the "City of the Arts," with a vibrant arts and culture scene that enriches the lives of residents and visitors alike. Art and culture are not only important for our community's well-being and quality of life but rather vital. It is our responsibility to ensure that the arts continue to thrive in Costa Mesa. The critical notion that art not only saves lives but can be life-changing is often overlooked. The arts have a profound impact on our community, not just in terms of providing cultural enrichment and entertainment, but also in driving economic growth and creating jobs. The Otis College Report on the Creative Economy confirms that the arts generate significant economic activity and foster jobs in California's communities (nearly 1.8 million - 7.6% of the workforce). By investing in the arts, we are not only supporting our local artists and cultural institutions, but we are also contributing to the economic vitality of California. Indeed, investing in the arts is an investment in the future of our city. By supporting art and culture in Costa Mesa, we can ensure that our community remains a vibrant, dynamic, and culturally rich place to live and work for generations to come.

Warm regards,



Heidi Zuckerman  
CEO and Director

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**From:** Leslie Murtaugh <murtaugh1009@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 8, 2023 5:03 PM  
**To:** CITY CLERK  
**Subject:** Costa Mesa Arts and Culture Master Plan

Good afternoon,

I'm writing today to encourage support for the continued full funding for the Cost Mesa Arts and Culture Master Plan. As long term residents of the city, my family and I are very pleased with the recent progress that is being made to help our city align with its motto, "City of the Arts."

Thank you for all you do!

Leslie Murtaugh

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Leslie Murtaugh

[lmurtaugh@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lmurtaugh@sbcglobal.net)

Let's celebrate our world through art!

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**From:** Cynthia McDonald <cmcdonald.home@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023 9:41 AM  
**To:** STEPHENS, JOHN; REYNOLDS, ARLIS; MARR, ANDREA; CHAVEZ, MANUEL; HARLAN, JEFFREY; HARPER, DON; GAMEROS, LOREN; FARRELL HARRISON, LORI ANN  
**Cc:** CITY CLERK; GREEN, BRENDA  
**Subject:** May 9, 2023 Budget Study Session

Honorable Mayor, City Council Members, and City Manager:

I have some questions and comments about the Staff Report and I know 2-3 minutes is not going to be enough to cover them in public comment, so I am submitting them in written format with the hope they will be addressed at tonight's meeting.

1. Staffing. I am concerned that we still need to increase funding in order to attract, recruit and retain high-quality staff. Why are we unable to do this year after year? It seems that we are hiring staff and training them, but then after a relatively short period of time, they are leaving for other municipalities. Has a study been done as to the cause? When we hire someone who does not stay with the City, the cost of training them is lost. When this happens over and over, we are losing the cost of training over and over. Is it only that we are not paying market-rate compensation (wages plus benefits) or is it more? This question needs to be addressed for new rank and file employees and tenured and experienced staff in our Police and Fire Departments. Is the overtime cost for the Fire Department due to a lack of personnel?
2. Project Homekey/Bridge Shelter. I support these projects, but is the City of Newport Beach going to contribute anything towards expansion of the Bridge Shelter since it will likely want to use some of the new beds and facilities? Given the County's inability to get State housing credit for projects like Project Homekey, is it interested in contributing more funds to the project? What is the five year projected cost to the City? Before the City commits funding, we need to know if we are footing all the bill, or a portion of it.
3. Cannabis Gross Receipts Tax. Please explain the \$3m estimate. What have we received so far? With so much competition both inside our city and from other cities, how realistic is this estimate? Should it be more or less? What was the cost to administer the permitting program the past two years? Are we really making money from Measure Q? Los Angeles has been collecting a lot off of cannabis business taxes for years (it takes 10% off the top), so I would hope with all the applications we are seeing before the Planning Commission that the revenue would be rolling in, but need assurance this is the case.
4. Measure K. Allocating \$700k for community visioning and rezoning to comply with Measure K is unrealistic. The City received \$3m in funding for the same type of work on the

Fairview Developmental Center. Approximately \$1.5m of the funds for FDC will go towards the cost of preparing an environmental impact report, but it could end up being more, depending on how it is rezoned. The bundle of Measure K parcels is considerably larger than the FDC land, and the cost of the EIR that will need to be prepared in connection with the rezoning will also be considerably larger. The City needs to allocate a more realistic sum towards community visioning and planning.

5. Traffic Signal at Belfast and Fairview. This is not needed. There is a signal one block north of Belfast on Fairview and another two blocks south. I've turned onto Belfast and exited from Belfast at various times of day and it only took approximately 30 seconds of waiting for traffic to clear. In contrast, the signals at Paularino and Fairview take at least 90 seconds. In terms of a new signal providing safety, if a traffic signal is all it takes, then why didn't the signal at McCormick stop crashes? The motor vehicle incident problem with Fairview Road doesn't originate from the lack of signals. Through the years I've listened to the knowledgeable transportation engineers employed by the City and I've learned a lot from them. I imagine they want to do a feasibility study of the intersection in question. They don't typically recommend a traffic signal at every intersection, which is what is being requested here. I suggest the City Council meet with the transportation specialists before embarking on approving this unnecessary signal. The money would be better spent on traffic calming on Belfast, Paularino and Fairview Road itself, along with sidewalk improvements and crosswalks needed to make this section ADA compliant. In addition, please fix the dangerous/nonexistent bike lanes and the pitiful medians between McCormick and Baker that look like they haven't had any attention for years (because they haven't, except for the removal of a dead tree). This is one of the gateways to the City and needs to look better.

I would appreciate it if you would address my concerns or ask that Staff address them. Thank you.

Cynthia McDonald

Sent from my phone. Please excuse typos and strange autocorrect errors.

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**From:** Charlene <charlene.ashendorf@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023 10:00 AM  
**To:** CITY CLERK  
**Subject:** City of the Arts Aiming for greatness!

Mayor Stephens, Members of the city council,

We chose Costa Mesa as our home over 20 years ago because we recognized that a city of the arts would ensure an inclusive community where art is vibrant and welcome.

In keeping with the current theme, **The Art of Collaboration**, Costa Mesa's arts thrives because of partnerships with our schools, SCR, Pacific Symphony, Segerstrom Center and OCMA just to name a few.

Mayor & Council, Thanks to *your* commitment to arts, we have an **Arts & Culture Master plan**, a bright addition to the staff **Arts Specialist** Laurette Garnener and the **Arts Commission!**

As the commission finishes out the fiscal year, accomplishments included its first art crawl, an expanded and successful utility box program, another highly successful ArtVenture and a strengthened expanded arts grant program.

**We** are aiming for greatness and cannot rest on our laurels. We must keep the momentum that is building. I urge you to support the Staff recommendation for the Arts budget FY 23-24 which was approved and is outlined in the adopted Arts Master Plan:

1. Bring Free Park Performances by local artists
2. Expand the 2nd annual arts crawl
3. Support Costa Mesa Free at Segerstrom Center Campus which offers our residents free tickets at selected performances- ART FOR ALL
4. Install large-scale temporary art throughout the city
5. Approve a showmobile

Ambitious as these goals sound, there was buy-in from council, stakeholders and residents.

With your support creativity and creatives will flourish, young and old will be inspired, **because a culturally rich community uplifts the human spirit and promotes civic pride.**

Thank you,

*Charlene M. Ashendorf*

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**From:** Naree Sorich <mrsnareesorich@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023 10:15 AM  
**To:** CITY CLERK  
**Subject:** Art Master Plan

Hello my name is naree sorich and I'm a mother of 3 in Costa Mesa! We love the arts and being so close to Disneyland the kiddos are way into imagination and freedom to be creative!! I am writing this to advocate for art master plan!!! Thanks so much naree sorich

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Lindsay Ryffel <lindsayryffel@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023 10:34 AM  
**To:** CITY CLERK  
**Subject:** Art masters

Hello,

My name is Lindsay Ryffel and I have two children in Newport Mesa school district and one more entering in a few years. I would love to see an art masters program implemented! Art is so important to the develop of our children's creative minds.

Thank you,  
Lindsay Ryffel

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Sean De Wine <dewine9@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023 11:09 AM  
**To:** CITY CLERK; ASHENDORF, CHARLENE  
**Subject:** Query and recommendations on Arts Council Allocation of Funding

Dear Costa Mesa City Council,

I reviewed the documents on the Costa Mesa Arts budget. It is my understanding that the funding is coming entirely from cannabis and that Costa Mesa Arts can only obtain .05% of that tax revenue? And the city plans to only bring in \$2.9M in revenues annually....I am not sure if I read it correctly.....If that is the case it would only place the entire cities art budget at \$145,000 a year or approximately \$12,000 a month for the entire city? It would appear that the arts in Costa Mesa is definetly taking a back seat in list of priorities for the City of Costa Mesa. I wonder how the City then deserves to call itself "The City of the Arts"? Also, I find it disturbing that the entirety of funding is coming from the selling of Cannabis? Could the City Council please clarify this. I have some objections to this for two reasons. One is the arts is often placed in the context of drug culture. Second, an entire art program is being funded through the sales of marijuana? In my experience more often than not the sale of marijuana brings about a hyper "Organized Crime" element into the narrative of a city. That can be debated at an other meeting and time. I appreciate the medicinal use of marijuana but there is often a lot of unspoken baggage that comes with that and that could really tarnish a new City Wide Arts Program should things go awry.

I need further details on how funding is spent because just running an after school art programs alone would eat that entire arts budget up. The City of Costa Mesa is still highly unaware of the entirety of its Arts Community or what a powerhouse it actually has at its disposal. Also no thought, time or finances has been given to attract artists from around the world to the city. There is no monies allocated or a field position created for an Fine Arts Ambassador for the City. That person does the outreach and grass roots campaigning to bring new talent to a city. I did it in my capacity when helping create Santa Ana's Artist Village. Additional the architect Steve Shortridge and I did it in Venice Beach California. Both happen to be the most successful art districts in Southern California currently.

Cutting down funding of the arts in Costa Mesa destroys future narratives and possibilities and city wide exposure on a global scale. It also cancels out a lot of equity for minorities because there is so little arts programing or arts opportunities occuring in the City with a weekend arts budget. Every financial analysis is telling us that with the advent of automation in America the new highest paying jobs to come up in the next 20 years are going to be "Arts and Creative Related Vocations". The City of Costa Mesa needs to start planning for the future of it's youth and prioritizing the arts as the center of that foundation.

The City needs to invest in a public arts program. It needs to attract small theaters to the city. It needs banners on public streets that make people aware of its arts and fashion culture here. A massive City Wide mural program should be implemented. More emphasis of creating the cities own "Artist Village on the West Side of the City should be explored instead of more housing. That action will create a ton of unimagined artistic cottage industries for the city. Where is the Cities "Film Program"? The best paying jobs in California are in the film industry but Costa Mesa hasn't figured that out and initiated a youth film project for the city. Costa Mesa has a world class fashion industry. But the City has yet to have teens work with local fashion designers and do a public fashion show at a local like Triangle Square where "ALL THE RESIDENTS OF COSTA MESA" are aware and can see it. Basically, everyone around the Pacific Rim should be aware of the City of Costa Mesa and the fact that its 'ALL IN WITH THE ARTS" and is willing tom spend the money to make that happen and get the message out to all the cities along the Pacific Rim and Ocean.....

Economic impact reports of Venice Beach/Abbot Kinney Arts District + Santa Ana Downtown Artists Village +San Antonio, Texas should be brought to City Council and exemplify the all the monies the city will be loosing if the City Council shrifts the fine arts. Money and dollar amounts are the only ways city councils ever listen or allocate additional findings to the fine arts . I would also recommend that the Arts Council demand a City wide hotel tax or automobile sales tax to fund the fine arts in addition to the small cannabis tax or as a means to ween the fine arts away from connections with the sales of drugs. I believe a hotel tax does not need to go through the state for approval to utilize it?!? That is only my opinion how to resolve some of the financial issues for arts funding. .... Skeith DeWine

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**From:** Sara Bert <sarabarr@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023 11:49 AM  
**To:** CITY CLERK  
**Subject:** Support for the Costa Mesa

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Costa Mesa Arts & Culture Master Plan. As a resident of Costa Mesa (The City of Arts), I believe that the arts and culture are essential to our community's well-being and quality of life. The Costa Mesa Arts & Culture Master Plan provides a comprehensive and strategic approach to promoting and enhancing the arts and culture in our city.

The plan outlines a variety of initiatives that will help to enrich our community, including public art installations, cultural events and festivals, and creative spaces for artists and performers. These initiatives will not only provide entertainment and enrichment for our residents but will also attract visitors and tourists to our city, boosting our local economy.

I am particularly impressed by the plan's focus on equity and inclusion, ensuring that all members of our community have access to the benefits of arts and culture. The plan acknowledges that access to arts and culture is not evenly distributed in our society and seeks to address this through targeted outreach and programming.

I urge the Costa Mesa City Council to fully endorse and implement the Costa Mesa Arts & Culture Master Plan. Investing in the arts and culture will pay dividends for our city's residents, businesses, and visitors for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara Bert

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**From:** Ben Ritter <ben@benjaminritter.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023 11:57 AM  
**To:** CITY CLERK  
**Subject:** Budget Meeting

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the arts budget in the proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget for fiscal year 2023-24. Increasing spending on the arts in the next year will build on the momentum established by major milestones such as the opening of OCMA and help transform Costa Mesa into a cultural destination. Moreover, it will support local artists to bring their work to the public, diffusing culture throughout the city and thereby creating a strong sense of civic identity.

While I have lived in Costa Mesa for the majority of my life, I have also lived in various other cities such as Brooklyn, NY, Dallas, TX, Los Angeles, CA and even Florence, Italy. What I appreciate most about each place is the truly unique character cultivated by the artists and other creative individuals, both over time and in the present. In each of those places, art wove its way into the urban fabric, sometimes dramatically, sometimes subtly. From centuries old architectural sculpture to contemporary public art exhibitions to free live musical performances, these memories have become an important part of me. Participating in art, whether through viewing a composition on a utility box or attending a live performance, allows a community to dream together, to share in a dialogue that connects us all.

For an example from Costa Mesa, Isamu Noguchi's *California Scenario* has always been a place I have wanted to share with others. I treasure the memories of playing there as a child and rediscovering it many years later as a young art student. It is one of my favorite places in the city and makes me very proud to call Costa Mesa home. Moving back to California after many years away, it was one of the first places I took my young son.

As wonderful as this example is, so much more could be done. How can Costa Mesa broaden access to the arts? How can we celebrate our own diversity as well as inviting perspectives from other communities around the globe? There is much more work to be done and I believe that the first step in this direction is support for the 2023-24 Capital Improvement Program.

Sincerely,  
Ben Ritter

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